

Good Morning

My name is Erin Kieliszewski and I am the proud mother of six children. Four of them are with me today. Thank you for providing the time for me to speak to you.

I consider myself to be blessed. In fact, I've been blessed six times over. My first three children were born to me biologically, and the next three as Emily mentioned were born in my heart through the open adoption program. I have been employed as a teacher for the last twenty-five years. This school year I greet twenty-seven eager, smiling faces each morning in my role as a second grade teacher in our great public school system. A happy healthy family, a challenging job I love -clearly I count my blessings.

As Emily mentioned earlier, I WAS granted a paid leave following the birth of my first three children. That was not the case for the next three children. The reason was clear. "The time following the birth of a child is a recovery period for the mother."

Although I think we can agree the time after the birth of any child IS certainly a time of recovery, but it is not and should not be limited to or thought solely as a recovery period for a mother.

I am suggesting that the time following the birth or placement of an adopted child be recognized as a necessary time for either parent to provide sensitive, responsive, consistent parenting that all children NEED. It is this time when "bonding" takes place.

The time following birth, was when my children biological or adoptive got to know my voice, my husband's voice, our scent and our gentle touch. This important time period full of interaction resulted in a beautiful linking between my babies and me. It was like composing a synchronized "dance" over time.

The gift of time with a child does allow bonding – or the close emotional tie to take place. The parent child bond is woven out of love and responsibility. The child's first relationship needs to be with loving parents. Basically, children ~~W~~ GET love in order to GIVE love. This sets the stage for later interpersonal relationships. I believe the bond formed with my children early on as infants affects the relationships they have made and will continue to make as adults.

Today, I want you to consider what I have suggested to you. I am asking you to give your full support to House Bill 5261 which will give all parents and children the equal, fair early start in life that is so important, and necessary.